

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2 LINE 11 TO END OF SECTION)

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TAGS: TGEN, TOCY, PLOS, UR, US
SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF UF-USSR WORLD OCEANS AGREEMENT

1. SUMMARY - VIEWED IN TERMS OF INTERESTS, SIZE AND SCOPE OF OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH EFFORTS OF THE US AND USSR, A BASIS FOR A PRODUCTIVE BILATERAL COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP IN OCEANOGRAPHY IS READILY APPARENT. DURING THE FIVE YEARS OF THE PRESENT OCEANS BILATERAL, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THE AGREEMENT HAS FALLEN FAR SHORT OF ITS POTENTIAL. LITTLE DISCERNIBLE ACTIVITY HAS GONE ON IN THE MAJORITY OF THE WORKING GROUPS, AND THE SCIENTIFIC BENEFIT FROM THIS BILATERAL TO THE U.S. IS MINIMAL. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT THE U.S. HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO USE THE BILATERAL SUCCESSFULLY FOR SPIN-OFF BENEFITS, SUCH AS MOVING THE SOVIETS TOWARD MORE FAVORABLE POSITIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES SUCH AS LOS MARINE RESEARCH.

WHILE THE EMBASSY ADMITTEDLY HAS ONLY A LIMITED VIEW OF THE CONDUCT OF THIS BILATERAL, IT APPEARS THE SOVIETS ARE OBTAINING FROM IT SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER BENEFITS THAN
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THE US. THEY HAVE USED THE BILATERAL TO INCREASE THEIR ACCESS TO SUPERIOR US OCEANOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY AND LABORATORY FACILITIES, WHILE US SPECIALISTS STILL HAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE ACCESS HERE.

ADMINISTRATIVE LAXITY ON BOTH SIDE ABOUNDS, AND THE MISHAPS RESULTING SO SEVERE, THAT THE BILATERAL MIGHT BE

CONSIDERED AS ACTUALLY HARMING RATHER THAN FURTHERING BILATERAL OCEANOGRAPHY CONTACTS. NEVERTHELESS WE BELIEVE THE BILATERAL DESERVES ANOTHER LIMITED CHANCE. CONTINGENT ON WEEDING OUT UNPRODUCTIVE AREAS, A SHARPENED FOCUS ON WHAT THE US INTENDS TO GET OUT OF THE BILATERAL. AND A COMPLETE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHAUL. IT IS OF PRIME IMPORTANCE THAT A FULL TIME US EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, PREFERABLY A RUSSIAN LANGUAGE SPEAKING FSO WITH EXPERIENCE IN SOVIET AFFAIRS, BE ASSIGNED TO COORDINATE THE BILATERAL SHOULD IT BE RENEWED. THE EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT A LIMITED RENEWAL FOR PERHAPS TWO YEARS IS THE BEST OPTION, AND THAT A DECISION FOR FURTHER RENEWAL BE LEFT IN ABEYANCE PENDING RESULTS ON WHETHER ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE ORDER CAN BE IMPOSED ON THE BILATERAL. END SUMMARY.

2. PROBLEMS OF ASSESSMENT AND BALANCE

THE EMBASSY IS LEFT SOMEWHAT AT SEA IN ASSESSING THE BILATERAL BECAUSE, (1) CONTACT WITH US DELEGATIONS VISITING THE SOVIET UNION IS EXTREMELY INFREQUENT (OUR RECORDS INDICATE NO US DELEGATIONS HAVE VISITED IN THE LAST HALF OF 1977). (2) FEEDBACK FROM THE SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES UNDER THE BILATERAL TAKING PLACE IN THE US HAS BEEN NON-EXISTENT OR VERY LATE. (WE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE MARCH 1977 JCM ONLY LAST NOVEMBER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND AFTER SEVERAL REQUESTS.) (3) BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO WORK LARGELY OUTSIDE OF ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS ON TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS. THE EMBASSY SEEMS TO BE CALLED INTO THE PICTURE ONLY AT THE LAST MOMENT TO SORT OUT ADMINISTRATIVE SNAFUS.

DESPITE THESE HANDICAPS, A CLEAR PICTURE EMERGES FROM OUR REVIEW OF AN IMBALANCE IN BENEFITS FAVORING THE SOVIETS UNDER THE BILATERAL. JUDGING FROM THE VISA CABLES ALONE, A SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER NUMBER OF SOVIETS ARE TRAVELING TO THE US THAN US SPECIALISTS HERE. SOVIET EXPERTS APPEAR TO BE OBTAINING VERY WIDE ACCESS TO US RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS AND SUPERIOR US OCEANOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY, WHILE US EXPERTS ARE CONFINED TO A VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF INSTITUTES IN THE SOVIET UNION. EXCEPT FOR ONE VISIT IN 1976, IT SEEMS THAT US SPECIALISTS HAVE NEVER OBTAINED ACCESS TO EXTENSIVE SOVIET OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH FACILITIES ON THE PACIFIC COAST, NOR PARTICIPATED IN THE LARGE SOVIET RESEARCH PROGRAM IN THE ARCTIC SEA. IN THE POLYMODE PROJECT, THE SOVIETS HAVE SENT A POLYMODE COORDINATOR TO THE US, WHILE A RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENT HERE HAS NEVER BEEN FINALIZED. THE

HISTORY OF LACK OF ACCESS UNDER THE BILATERAL APPEARS TO BE ONE OF OPPORTUNITIES MISSED RATHER THAN DIRECT SOVIET REFUSALS, ALTHOUGH THAT ALSO HAS HAPPENED ON OCCASION. THE BALANCE THEY HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF WHAT THEY WANT TO GET OUT OF THE BILATERAL AND ARE MORE AGGRESSIVE IN PURSUING THEIR GOALS.

3. AGREEMENT ACTIVITIES

ONLY TWO OF THE FIVE JWGS APPEAR RELATIVELY ACTIVE, AND CONTINUING ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS HAVE REDUCED JOINT WORK IN BOTH. TWO OTHER JWGS HAVE AT LAST

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SHOWN SOME SIGN OF LIFE, ALTHOUGH CONTINUATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS SERIOUSLY HINDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVE JOINT WORK. ONW JWG - INTERCALIBRATION AND STANDARDIZATION (06.04) SEEMS MORIBUND, ALTHOUGH COMPLETION OF ITS PROPOSED TASKS WOULD ASSIST THE WORK OF THE OTHER JWGS. TWO FORMERLY INACTIVE WORKING GROUPS, LARGE-SCALE OCEAN ATMOSPHERE INTERACTION (06.01) AND GEOLOGY, GEOPHYSICS AND GEOCHEMISTRY (06.03) HAVE COME TO LIFE SINCE THE LAST JCM. DUE TO LACK OF ACCESS TO SUBSTANTIVE REPORTING, HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO STATE WHETHER THESE CHRONICALLY INACTIVE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO SUBSTANTIVE AND USEFUL ONES. COLLABORATIVE WORK ON THE NORTH AND EQUATORIAL PACIFIC OCEAN STUDIES (06.01) HAS YET TO BEGIN AND THE JOINT GARP ATLANTIC TROPICAL EXPERIMENT (GATE) COOPERATION HAS MOVED IN FITS AND STARTS. THE POLYMODE PROJECT, THE CENTERPIECE OF THE OCEANS CURRENTS AND DYNAMICS (06.02) JWG, HAS BEEN THE

MOST ACTIVE AND PROMISING SINGLE PROJECT IN THE BILATERAL, HOWEVER, THE COMPLETION DATE IS OVER A YEAR AWAY AND IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO STATE WHAT THE SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS FROM THIS PROJECT WILL BE. WHILE THE BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTIVITY (06.05) JWG HAS BEEN ACTIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS SEEM TO BE PARTICULARLY ACUTE HERE, RESULTING IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VISISTS DURING THE PAST YEAR.

4. AGREEMENT ADMINISTRATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO THE EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES. WHILE THE SOVIET SIDE SEEMS SOMEWHAT MORE CENTRALIZED, THE US EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT HAS APPARENTLY FAILED TO IMPOSE ADEQUATE COORDINATION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPATING US SCIENTISTS. MESSAGES ON SUBSTANTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS STILL LARGELY PASS BY INTERNATIONAL MAIL OR THROUGH THE NOAA-SCST TELEX, DESPITE EMBASSY PROTESTS TO BOTH SECRETARIATS. THE SOVIET EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DR. A.P. METAL'NIKOV, OF THE STARE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SCST) CLAIMS THAT COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH THE EMBASSY INTRODUCES UNNECESSARY DELAY INTO THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION. HIS IS UNFORTUNATELY UNAVAILABLE FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME TO THE EMBASSY WHEN URGENT ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS ON THE US SIDE ARISE, ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT HESITATE TO CALL ON THE EMBASSY WHEN THE SOVIET SIDE NEEDS RAPID AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE. WE INFER FROM THIS BEHAVIOUR THAT METAL'NIKOV AND THE SCST ARE AWARE OF EMBASSY MONITORING OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND CONCERN FOR REASONABLE MUTUALITY OF BENEFITS AND ACCESS, AND THEREFORE VIEWS THE EMBASSY AS AN UNWELCOME INTERLOCUTOR.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE PAST FIVE YEAR HISTORY OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS, LITTLE TANGIBLE SCIENTIFIC RESULTS, AND DECIDED TILT IN BALANCE OF BENEFITS IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIETS, WOULD ARGUE STRONGLY AGAINST RENEWAL OF THE AGREEMENT IN ITS PRESENT FORM. THE SOVIETS ARE APPARENTLY ANXIOUS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUCH A RENEWAL AND PASSIVE US ACQUIESCENCE IN IT WOULD MERELY CONFIRM UNSATISFACTORY SOVIET PERFORMANCE FOR AN ADDITIONAL FIVE YEARS. ON THE

OTHER HAND ALLOWING THE AGREEMENT TO LAPSE AND DISTRIBUTING SALVAGEABLE JOINT ACTIVITIES TO OTHER BILATERAL AGREEMENTS HAS CONSIDERABLE DISADVANTAGES. WE DOUBT THAT A NEW DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVITIES TO OTHER BILATERALS WOULD IMPROVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT OVER THE SHORT RUN. THE EFFECT OF SUCH A TRANSITION ON PROJECTS WHICH ARE ALREADY POORLY COORDINATED MIGHT BE DISASTEROUS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF POLYMODE. AN ABRUPT NON-RENEWAL DECISION ALSO MIGHT WELL BE INTERPRETED AS AN POLITICAL SIGNAL IN A TIME OF MALAISE IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIETS. FINALLY, NON-RENEWAL WOULD PRECLUDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A TRULY USEFUL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN AN AREA IN WHICH WE BELIEVE THERE IS LARGE UNEXPLORED POTENTIAL.

THE EMBASSY THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THAT THE US PROPOSE TO RENEW THE AGREEMENT FOR LIMITED TIME, PERHAPS TWO YEARS, AT THE NEXT JCM. WE SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR AT THAT TIME THAT WE HAVE BEEN DISSATISFIED WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE BILATERAL AND THAT THE LIMITED EXTENSION IS A TRIAL PERIOD IN WHICH PAST INADEQUACIES MUST BE ELIMINATED OR ELSE THE AGREEMENT WILL LAPSE. THE US SHOULD PROPOSE FOR INCLUSION IN THE RECORD OF THE JCM THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIVE MEASURES:

(1) PRUNING OF INACTIVE PROJECTS UNDER THE BILATERAL, AND FORMALLY DEFINED METHODS FOR INITIATING AND TERMINATING JOINT PROJECTS, ALONG THE LINES OF PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE S&T JOINT COMMISSION IN 1976.

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(2) PROCEDURES TO INSURE ADEQUATE ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF DELEGATION VISITS PROGRAMS, SUCH AS INCLUDED IN THE 1977 HOUSING BILATERAL JCM PROTOCOL.

(3) PROCEDURES FOR TRANSMITTAL OF AGREEMENT-RELATED CORRESPONDENCE AND MESSAGES THROUGH ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS, AS IS THE CASE WITH THE OTHER BILATERALS.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE BELIEVE THE US SIDE AT THE JCM SHOULD EMPHASIZE OUR DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE SOVIET POSITION ON MARINE RESEARCH IN LOS. WE SHOULD NOTE THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY CONTINUATION OF A BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN MARINE RESEARCH WHILE THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUES TO SUPPORT A LOS POSITION WHICH WILL SEVERELY HINDER MARINE RESEARCH WORLDWIDE.

FINALLY, THE US SHOULD ASSIGN A PERMANENT FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR THE AGREEMENT. THE EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS ASSIGNMENT OF AN FSO OR AN INDIVIDUAL SIMILARLY EXPERIENCED IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICY LEADERSHIP. IDEALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE SHOULD BE RUSSIAN SPEAKING AND HAVE EXPERIENCE IN US/ SOVIET AFFAIRS. UNLESS WE ACHIEVE A BETTER COORDINATION OF BILATERAL ACTIVITIES ON THE US SIDE THROUGH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NOAA AND ICCUSA THE US WILL REMAIN AT A STRONG DISADVANTAGE IN SEEKING TO OBTAIN BALANCED BENEFITS FROM THIS BILATERAL. MATLOCK

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